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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000666

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

EUR/ERA WLUCAS, EUR/CE FOR JBERGEMANN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/12/2014
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SUBJECT: CZECH COMMENTS ON UPCOMING NOVEMBER GAERC

Classified By: Political Officer Amy Carnie for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: On November 12 emboff spoke with Czech MFA Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Department Deputy Director Magdalena Janesova in advance of the November 15-16 EU Foreign Ministers' meeting (GAERC). She noted that this is the "jumbo" GAERC as the Defense and Development Ministers will join discussions with the EU Foreign Ministers. She offered brief comments on Russia, Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. She also referenced the Czechs candidate for the European Commission - Stefan Fule - and the jockeying for position on the new EU slate of leaders (HighRep and President). End Summary.

FMs Discussing Russia Before Summit

12. (SBU) Janesova noted that Russia will be discussed over the informal dinner and that two hours are being dedicated to this discussion covering six issues in the lead up to the EU-Russia Summit on November 18. Janesova referenced five of the six areas for internal discussion as: EU-Russian Relations, Russian-U.S. relations, Russian relations with its neighbors (the Caucasus), Russian internal politics, and energy. The agenda for the summit is slightly different and will touch upon energy, human rights, Russia's interest in WTO membership, and climate change.

Somalia/Atalanta

13. (C) The French have proposed discussing Somalia, and the Czechs are very skeptical about the French view. According to Janesova, the French train a limited number of security forces of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in Djibouti and the French would like to transition this from a French initiative to an EU (ESDP) initiative. The Czechs share the perspectives of the Brits that this is too risky and too costly.

Afghanistan

14. (SBU) In addition to following up on the EU's Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy paper, Janesova indicated that the EU Foreign and Development Ministers will meet with UN Special Representative Kai Eide. Eide will brief and offer his recommendations as to how best to advance the international community's work in Afghanistan.

Middle East Peace Process

¶5. (SBU) Swedish FM Bildt is pressing hard for the EU to discuss the Middle East Peace Process, but as Janesova noted, many other EU member states questioned putting this on the agenda as they don't feel there is anything new for Bildt to discuss. Janesova stated that in her conversations with Israeli officials, the Israelis have noted that even the upcoming Spanish EU Presidency has more credibility than the Swedish currently have when it comes to advancing Middle East peace.

European Commission, High Rep and President

¶6. (SBU) On November 10, the Czech cabinet announced that Minister for European Affairs, Stefan Fule, would be the Czech Republic's nominee for the European Commission. Fule has noted Czech interest in the Enlargement or Transportation portfolios. Several MFA contacts have joked, however, that they will take whatever they are offered, given their standing within the EU following the torturous path to Czech ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

¶7. (SBU) Regarding EU High Representative, Janesova stated that British FM David Miliband is thought to be too arrogant and the Brits are putting more energy into advancing the candidacy of Tony Blair for the post of EU President. She noted that Swedish FM Karl Bildt appears out of the running, but Italian leftist Massimo D'Alema is getting a lot of attention. Regarding the EU President, she mentioned four names - Tony Blair, Belgian PM Herman Van Rompuy, Dutch PM Jan Peter Balkenende and Luxembourg PM Jean-Claude Juncker. Of the four, Janesova opined that it is ever the way of the

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EU to choose a compromise candidate and that the Belgian or Luxembourg PMs appear the most likely candidates to get the job at the European Council scheduled for November 19.
Thompson-Jones